cinematheque

SPRING 1987 SEASON

FROM THE POLE TO THE EQUATOR
by Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi (Apr. 30)

FEATURING

Hungarian Diaries
by Andras Szirtes

The Color of Pomegranates
by Sergei Paradjanov

News From Home
by Chantal Akerman

New Work by:
Sandra Davis
Larry Gottheim
Yervant Gianikian & Angela Ricci-Lucchi
Stan Brakhage
James Irwin
and others . . .

CHINESE ROULETTE by R.W. Fassbinder (Apr. 9)

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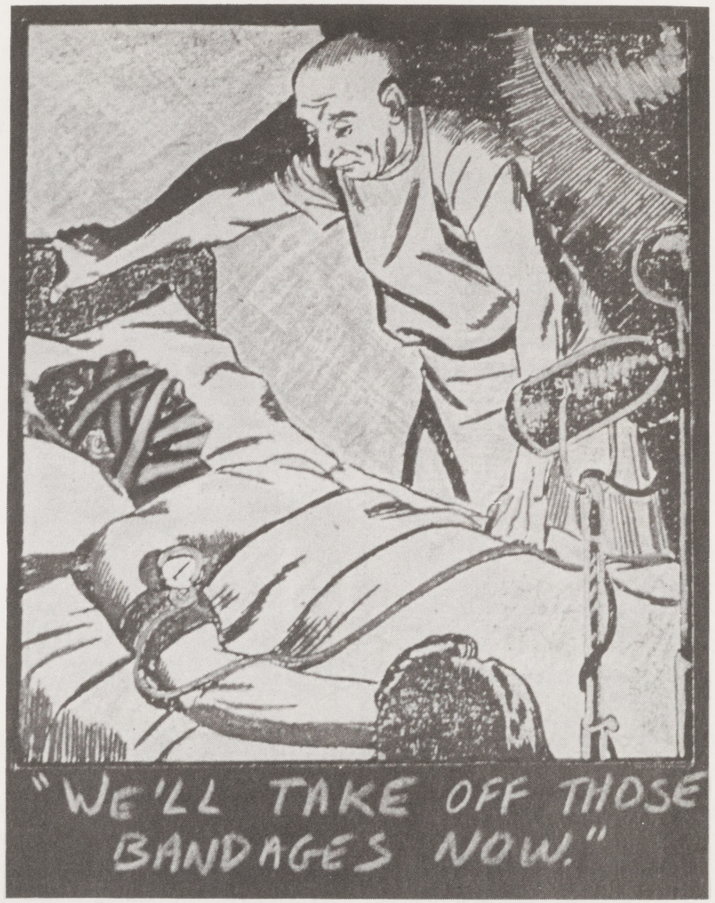

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Thank you for your support.

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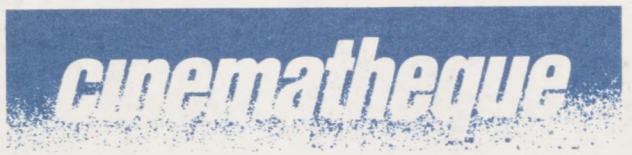

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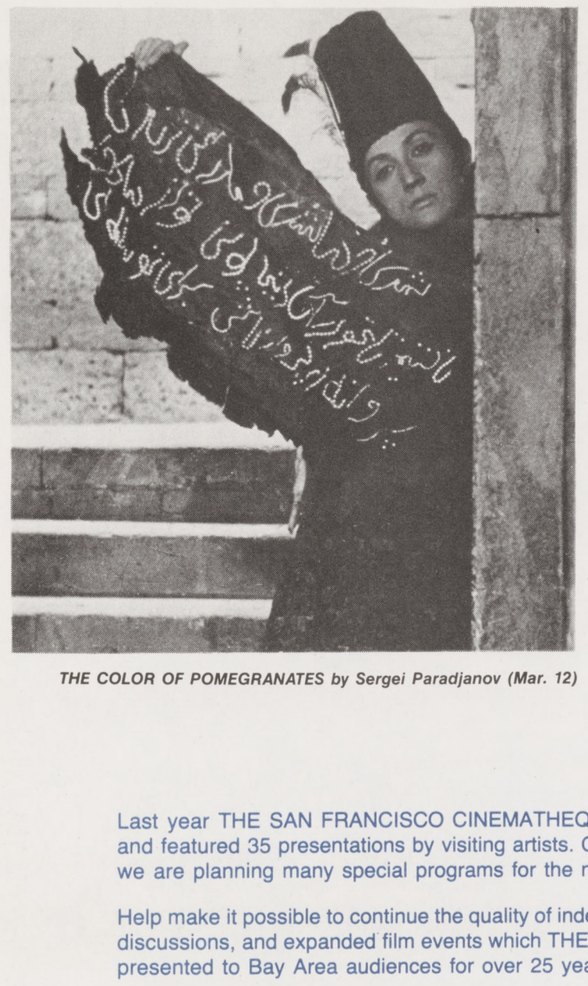

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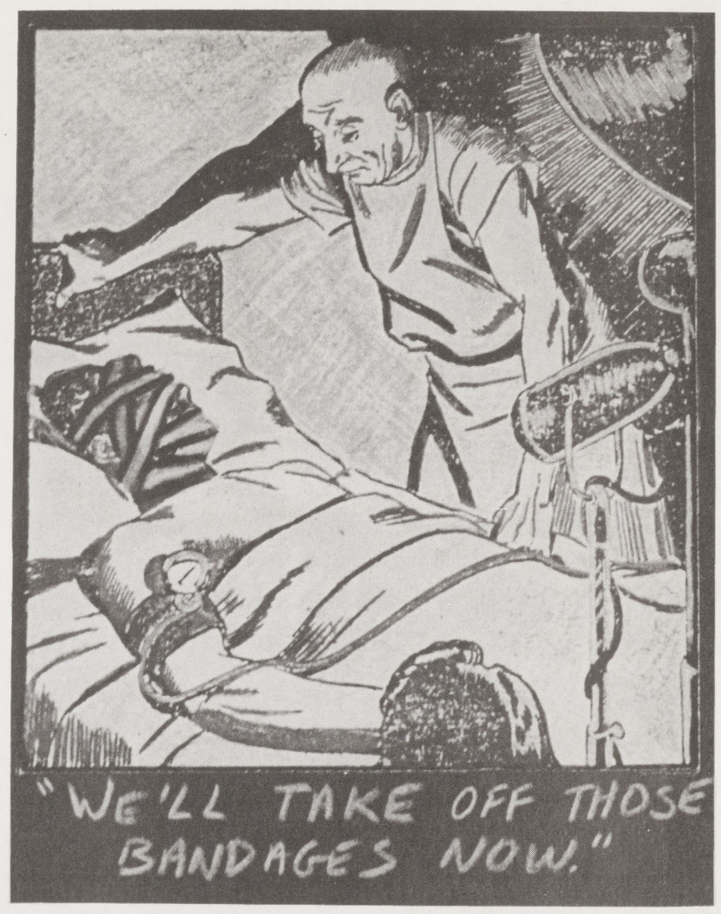

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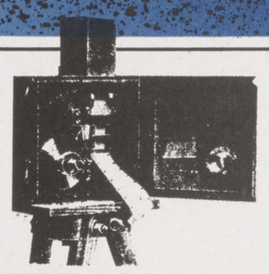


HIGHLIGHTS

The Spring calendar offers an opportunity to see new work by filmmakers from many countries in Asia and Europe: Andras Szirtes (Hungary) March 5, Super-8 films from Hong Kong March 8, Sergei Paradjanov (U.S.S.R.) March 12, Georges Franju (France) March 22, Takahiko Iimura (Japan) April 5, Fassbinder and Pabst (Germany) April 9 and May 3, Chantal Akerman (Belgium) April 26, and Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi (Italy) April 30.

RELATED EVENTS

We would like to recommend several programs of independent films at other theaters during March and April: A Tribute to Curt McDowell *at the Roxie on Tuesday, March 3; the 9th Annual S.F. Art Institute Film Festival, Friday-Sunday, March 13-15 at 8:00 P.M. in the Art Institute Theater; three programs by the S.F. International Film Festival, all at the Kabuki:* A Salute to Canyon Cinematheque *hosted by James Broughton, Saturday, March 28, at 2:00 P.M.; winners of the Experiments in Form competition (Film) on Monday, March 30 at 7:00 P.M. and (Video) on Wednesday, April 1 at 9:00 P.M.; and a program of George Kuchar films, including the new* Ascension of the Demonoids *at the York on Monday, April 6.*

ALL SHOWS AT S.F. ART INSTITUTE, 800 CHESTNUT ST., 8:00 PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Mar. 5 — Thursday

ANDRAS SZIRTES: *HUNGARIAN DIARIES*

Filmmaker Andras Szirtes in person.

Hungarian filmmaker Andras Szirtes will make his first appearance in San Francisco with a selection of three chapters from his ongoing ***Diary*** series. Hungary continues to produce some of the most provocative and original independent films in Europe (largely thanks to BBS, the Bela Balazs Studio), and Szirtes' ***Diaries*** offers intimate glimpses of people and places within Budapest and the Hungarian countryside. Szirtes, who has been making films since he was 18, combines a playful though rigorous formal use of sound and image with a knowing appreciation of the ethnic character of his homeland. Films: ***Dawn*** (1973-80), ***Diaries***, selected chapters (1978-present).

MATTER OF CLARITY by Sandra Davis (Apr. 12)

Mar. 8 — Sunday

THE MODERN FILMS GROUP

SUPER-8mm FILMS FROM HONG KONG

The films that most people know from Hong Kong are feature-length narratives, often of the Run Run Shaw Kung-fu variety. But now there is a group known as Modern Films, organized in 1983 by Roger Garcia, that has developed an alternative Hong Kong cinema outside the dominant structures of the commercial industry. The Modern Films group works in Super-8mm, 16mm and video, using the means and limitations available to them to create a more personally responsive cinema. They take as their credo J.P. Gorin's quote that "if you have $2, you make $2 movies." Tonight's program features a selection of Super-8mm films by four members of the group, Comyn Mo, Jim Shun, Pia Ho and Simon Ko.

Mar. 12 — Thursday

THE COLOR OF POMEGRANATES

BY SERGEI PARADJANOV

The Color of Pomegranates is an exotic evocation of the life and work of 18th century Armenian poet-hero Sayat Nova. Paradjanov's first feature since ***Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors*** uses daring symbolic imagery to trace the history and heritage of the Armenian nation and people — symbols that led to the film's suppression and Paradjanov's imprisonment by Soviet authorities. "***Sayat Nova*** is an extraordinary film . . .steeped in folk culture and religious ritual . . .a series of linked tableaux — strange marvels in stone churches punctuated by primitive bits of camera magic." — **J. Hoberman, *Village Voice.***

Mar. 19 — Thursday

YVONNE RAINER'S *KRISTINA TALKING PICTURES*

Yvonne Rainer's third feature film (1976) was her first in color. It extends her exploration of interweaving narrative with theoretical and political concerns. The film's narrative is simple: Kristina, a lady lion-tamer from Budapest comes to New York to be a dancer, has an affair with Raoul, a seaman, who leaves her. Within a form that allows for shifting correlations between word and image, persons and performer, enactment and illustration, ***Kristina . . .*** circles in a narrowing spiral toward its primary concerns: the uncertain relation of public act to personal fate, the possibility for disparity between public directed conscience and private will. "In its multi-levelled disjointed style, ***Kristina . . .*** may be seen to revive the lessons of Duchamp, the Cubists, even the epic, to create a melodrama for our time, one that speaks to the fractured sensibility of anyone living in the difficult world of modern urban culture." — B. Ruby Rich

Mar. 22 — Sunday

INSIGHTS OF HORROR: FRANJU & BUNUEL

Eyes without a Face is a masterpiece of B&W cinematic expressionism that thoroughly transcends its genre. A renowned plastic surgeon responsible for the disfigurement of his daughter attempts to graft the faces of kidnapped young women onto hers. The film beautifully evokes mood and atmosphere with its careful attention to light, texture and detail. ***Blood of the Beasts***, on the surface a record of the operation of a Paris slaughterhouse, blends the cruel and the commonplace to become a poignant document of poetic realism. Bunuel's curious ***Land without Bread*** leads one to question the authenticity of this "documentary" about a pathetic village whose people suffer every manner of cruelty that nature chooses to inflict.

Mar. 26 — Thursday

NEW WORK BY BRAKHAGE I — *THE LOOM* AND OTHERS

Filmmaker Stan Brakhage in person.

Stan Brakhage has astonished the film world with the completion of neary 2½ hours of new work, including what are clearly some of his strongest films in many years. ***The Loom*** (1986) took several years to make, and marks a significant advancement in Brakhage's aesthetic: "A multiple-superimposition hand-painted visual symphony of animal life on earth. ***The Loom*** might be compared to musical quartet form (as there are almost always 4 superimposed pictures); but the complexity of texture, multiplicity of tone, and the variety of inter-related rhythm, suggest symphonic dimensions. The film is very inspired by Georges Melies: the animals exist (in Jane's enclosure) as on a stage, their inter-relationships edited to the disciplines of dance . . ." (S.B.) Other films include the ***Caswallon Trilogy, Loud Visual Noises, Nightmusic,*** and the ***Dante Trilogy.***

Mar. 29 — Sunday

NEW WORK BY BRAKHAGE II — *FAUSTFILM* AND *LOVE SACRIFICE*

Filmmaker Stan Brakhage in person.

For this second program of his recent works, Brakhage will present a dramatic sound film, ***Faustfilm***, a modern version of the Faust legend which he has been waiting 30 years to make (early script fragments appeared in ***Metaphors on Vision***). Composer Joel Haertling plays a young Faust who wishes to be old without living through the intervening years. For ***Love Sacrifice*** Brakhage quotes Petrarch: "Firstly, I revealed in salutary confession the secret filth of my misdeeds, which had long been festering in stagnant silence; and I made it my custom to confess often, and thus to display the wounds of my blinded soul . . ." To which he adds: " . . .any sacrifice of love is, yes, 'filth' or at the very least 'misdeed'. An academic reading of Petrarch tends to bias thought that there are kinds of love which might be wrong: I do not believe this."

Apr. 2 — Thursday

NEW BAY AREA FILMS

The Cinematheque presents another evening of recently completed films by filmmakers currently living in the Bay Area, including the premieres of William Farley's ***Tribute*** and Scott Stark's 3-projector ***Auto Evocation.*** Films: ***The Dictation*** (1986) by Jennifer Montgomery, ***The Straw Man*** (1987) by Alice Armstrong, ***Tribute*** (1986) by William Farley, ***Auto Evocation (Part 1)*** (1987) for three super-8mm projectors by Scott Stark, ***Tu m'*** (1986) by Robert Fox, ***BABUBA*** (1986) by Rock Ross, ***Yellow Aria*** (1986) by Tina Bastajian, and ***Wharf*** (1986) by Beth Friedman.

Apr. 3 — Friday

OPEN SCREENING

SPECIAL LOCATION: Eye Gallery, 758 Valencia Street

The Cinematheque continues its tradition of regular open screenings, in which all filmmakers are invited to bring recently completed work — 8 mm, super-8 or 16mm, silent or sound. Films are shown on a first-come, first-shown basis. Admission is free.

Apr. 5 — Sunday

FILMS AND PERFORMANCE BY TAKAHIKO IIMURA

Filmmaker Takahiko Iimura will be present.

Taka Iimura continues to explore the relationship between image and reality, the experience of passing time and the elementary materials of the cinematic apparatus with elegant simplicity. Japan's most renowned avant-garde filmmaker has recently begun working with videotape (he will present two evenings of work at S.F.'s Museum of Modern Art), but for tonight's program Iimura will offer an overview of his films, including two performances using film and projectors.

Films: ***Ai (Love)*** (1962-63), ***A Dance Party in the Kingdom of Lilliput*** (1964), ***24 Frames Per Second*** (1975, revised 1978), ***Talking Picture (The Structure of Film Viewing*** (1981), ***Dubbing Session*** (1979), performance with two projectors.

Apr. 9 — Thursday

FASSBINDER'S *BOLWEISER* AND *CHINESE ROULETTE*

Special Starting Time: 7:30 P.M.

These two rarely screened gems from Fassbinder's prolific "middle period" (both were made in 1976) present the great German director at the height of his artistry. ***Bolweiser***, based on the novel by Oscar Graf, deals with the frustration, self-deception, and eventual disintegration of a middle-class stationmaster in '20s Weimar republic Germany after his wife has a series of extra-marital affairs. ***Chinese Roulette*** is perhaps the most stylistically dazzling of Fassbinder's films, a complex series of compositions orchestrating elaborate camera movement, mise-en-scene, and shots reflected from mirrors. A crippled teenage girl, her mute governess, her parents and their lovers spend a weekend engaging in a protracted power struggle. The film culminates in a spectacularly fiendish parlor game that offers unlimited opportunities for psychological sadism.

FIVE FILMS by Comyn Mo (Mar. 8)

Apr. 12 — Sunday

SYMBOLIC IMAGERY AND THE FEMALE VISION

Presentation by filmmaker Sandra Davis.

Sandra Davis returns to the Bay Area to premiere her new film, ***Matter of Clarity***, and lead a discussion on the importance of the symbolic process in the work of some of independent film's key women filmmakers. "Since its inception, film is a medium which has not only drawn women to its powers of expression, but also one which, in its own evolution of subject and form, has been uniquely shaped by a feminine, as well as masculine, vision. Is the potential for symbolic image-making "alive" today? Is all possibility of true symbol "dead" in a sea of pluralistic references? Has our sense of symbol degenerated into that of the vacant sign?" (S.D.)

Films: ***At Land*** (1944) by Maya Deren, ***Kristallnacht*** (1979) by Chick Strand, ***Asparagus*** (1978) by Suzan Pitt, ***Matter of Clarity*** (1986) by Sandra Davis, San Francisco premiere.

Apr. 16 — Thursday

NEW FILMS BY LARRY GOTTHEIM

Filmmaker Larry Gottheim will be present.

The Cinematheque welcomes Larry Gottheim back with two newly completed films, each of which marks a significant departure and development in his work following the completion of his ***Elective Affinities*** tetrology. As with all of Gottheim's films, these are densely conceived sound-image constructs, creating resonant and imaginative cinematic landscapes.

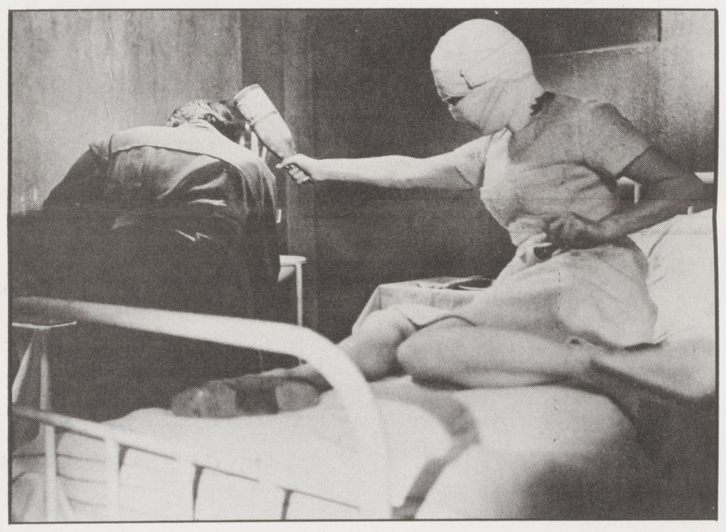
Films: ***Mnemosyne Mother of Muses*** (1986, Premiere): "A vibrant flow & undertow of sounds & images transform personal history into an expanding field of cinematic experience & associations." — L.G. ***"Sorry/Hear Us"*** (1986, Premiere): "A continuous transformation curving out and out, sketching possibilities playfully without working out every implication." — L.G. ***Natural Selection*** (1983): "From collaboratively produced material a kind of order is achieved from which . . .an abundance of association and interactive cinematic richness is produced." — L.G.

Apr. 23 — Thursday

JAMES IRWIN: TALKING FILMS

Filmmaker James Irwin will be present.

Since 1982 San Francisco filmmaker James Irwin has been making films that directly address their viewers, not through the sound track but with letters and words printed directly onto (and often becoming) the films' images. These often amusing, sometimes didactic films engage the viewer in a one-sided dialogue that gives new meaning to the craft of scriptwriting. This will be Irwin's first individual show at the Cinematheque and the first time that his "Talking Films" have been screened in their unified totality. The program features two world premieres, ***Hat Boxing*** and ***By the Lake***, that mark a new direction for Irwin in the use of sound, and a greater complexity of "plot."



EYES WITHOUT A FACE by Georges Franju (Mar. 22)

Apr. 26 — Sunday

NEWS FROM HOME BY CHANTAL AKERMAN

Photographed by Babette Mangolte, 1976, 90 min.

Chantal Akerman has emerged as one of the most audacious and compelling European filmmakers of the past decade. Akerman's films are unsettling experiences, confronting the audience with issues of female sexuality within a compelling formal construction. ***News from Home*** was Akerman's next film after the prize-winning ***Jeanne Dielman***. It contrasts images of New York with letters Akerman received from her mother during her first trip to New York (and away from home), moving between the European myth of America and the reality that Akerman discovered. "I think that it's a voluptuous film, because of the noise, the images, the colors. Sensual delight — there are a lot of people who don't know anymore what that is." — C.A.

Apr. 30 — Thursday

FROM THE POLE TO THE EQUATOR

Filmmakers Yervant Gianikian & Angela Ricci Lucchi in person.

Working as archivists and "film archeologists," Italian filmmakers Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi recast early film material into "possible assemblages and montages" that were never planned by the original producers. Their newest film, ***From the Pole to the Equator***, uses rare footage from the turn of the century that they reprinted from the 35mm nitrate original and hand-tinted to reinterpret the foundations of film representation. The film's soundtrack was composed by Bay Area musicians Keith Ullrich and Charles Anderson. Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi presented a program of their "scented films" at the Cinematheque during their last Bay Area visit in 1981. **Presented with the cooperation of the Italian Cultural Institute.**

From the Pole to the Equator (1987) by Yervant Gianikian & Angela Ricci Lucchi, 96 min., sound by Keith Ullrich & Charles Anderson, Bay Area Premiere.

May 3 — Sunday

WOOD'S *GLEN OR GLENDA?*/ PABST'S *SECRETS OF A SOUL*

Special Starting Time: 7:30 P.M.

"To say that Edward D. Wood's first feature, ***Glen or Glenda?*** (1953) is bizarre is ludicrous understatement. But to confine it to the stuporous ghetto of the Midnight Movie is unjust. True, it was produced to exploit the Christine Jorgenson sex-change scandal, but Wood was himself a transvestite who as a marine wore bra and panties underneath his uniform during action in the Pacific. ***Glen or Glenda?*** is a tour-de-force of editing, incorporating under a strict logic at least 5 levels of narration, carefully stacked like the layers of a house of cards, only to be hurled into the air in one of the most astonishingly constructed dream sequences in film history. This intricate formal and psychological construction bears comparison with G.W. Pabst's (***Pandora's Box***) little-known 1926 silent Freudian fiction, ***Secrets of a Soul***. While Pabst's achievement relies on careful integration of Freudian theory within a logic of editing and formal optical tricks, Wood's lies more purely in the aesthetic domain." — Keith Sanborn

The San Francisco Cinematheque, a project of the Foundation for Art in Cinema, is supported in part with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the San Francisco Foundation, the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, the California Tamarack Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Fund, the Columbia Foundation, the generous contributions of the Friends of the Cinematheque, and the cooperation of the San Francisco Art Institute and Eye Gallery.

Admission: $3.50 general / $2.00 students with I.D., seniors & disabled. Discount pass $12/5 admissions. To receive future calendars by mail, contact the Cinematheque office at 558-8129 or 480 Potrero Ave., S.F., CA 94110. Steve Anker, Program Director; David Gerstein, Administrative Director; Craig Baldwin, Peter Herwitz, Erika Martin & Chika Ogura, Exhibition Assistants; Lance Accord, Violet Murakami & George Spies, Interns. Poster Design: Alison Wood; Typesetting: KAZAN Typeset Services. Printed by Alonzo Printing Inc.